



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel - Joint Social Services**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Monday, 14 February 2022 at 1.00 pm

Present: Councillor P R Hood-Williams (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C A Holley
E T Kirchner
D W W Thomas

Councillor(s)

Y V Jardine
W G Lewis

Councillor(s)

S M Jones
G J Tanner

Co-opted Member(s)

T Beddow

Other Attendees

Mark Child

Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care & Community Health Services

Elliott King

Cabinet Member - Children Services

Alyson Pugh

Cabinet Member - Supporting Communities

Officer(s)

Amy Hawkins

Head of Adult Services

David Howes

Director of Social Services

Liz Jordan

Scrutiny Officer

Jane Whitmore

Strategic Lead Commissioner

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): A M Day, M Durke and H M Morris

Other Attendees: Julie Davies, Helen StJohn

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

No disclosures of interest were made.

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

No declarations were made.

3 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

4 Draft Budget Proposals

Councillors Mark Child, Elliott King and Alison Pugh along with relevant officers attended and went through the proposed budget proposals in relation to Adult Services, Child and Family Services and Poverty and Prevention, highlighting the main issues and answering questions.

The Panel agreed the following views and recommendations on the budget proposals in relation to Social Services it would like to make to Cabinet:

- The Panel is very encouraged to see the budget situation for Social Services this year, because of the increases and because of the savings, which look as if they are all going to be contractual. The only slight concern for the Panel is how far these contractual savings will go.
- The Panel understands that the Cabinet Papers show an £8.5m increase in the Social Services Budget for 2022/23 but the actual proposed budget for Social Services for 2022/23, in the Revenue Budget summary Sheet, is £16m. The Panel understands that the £8.5m is for additional pressures and that the difference between this and the £16m is for continued growth within the Service. The Panel feels this is a great opportunity to invest to improve services.
- The Panel intends to look at the transformation of services in more detail at future meetings. There is a need to have services which are economically and efficiently run, and the Panel needs to ensure we don't lose sight of this.
- The Panel welcomes the improved communication between Health, Social Services and Partners over the past few years and hopes this relationship will continue to grow.

The Convener of the Service Improvement and Finance Panel will attend Cabinet on 17 February to feed in the collective views of the scrutiny performance panels and write a letter to the Cabinet member.

5 Update on Management of Covid-19 Pandemic and Emergency Staffing Plan

Dave Howes, Director of Social Services attended to present an update on the current situation regarding the Covid-19 Pandemic and staffing issues.

Discussion Points:

- Panel informed contingency planning put in place during omicron wave is first class. Infections have plateaued at high levels of community transmission which is expected to last until Easter time. It will continue to be highly pressured until then but contingency plans in place enable some scope to refocus on backlogs. Hope to expand day service and respite offers in next few months and then from Easter concentrate on transformation agenda.
- Real pressures in Child and Family Services. Implications of number of social workers not being at levels they need to be meant had to recruit differently qualified staff, who need to focus on areas that allow for qualified social workers to concentrate on highest areas of risk and individuals with greatest levels of vulnerability.

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Cont'd

- Panel queried impact of long covid on Department's plans. Informed elements of Health and Social Care offer will need to be remodelled and Health Service has established specialist long covid service in the region, but funding is only guaranteed until the end of the financial year currently. In terms of workforce, it is not really significant in terms of numbers, but significant factor is where got long term absences as a number of those associated with long covid.
- Panel asked Cabinet Members and officers to pass on how much it appreciates the work and effort of management and staff within the Department.

The meeting ended at 1.50 pm